

Jesus the Jewish Cynic

Interpreting the historical Jesus
as a holy fool.

by

Lars Larsen

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Chapter 1: Preface

With this book I want to parttake in the academic quest for the historical Jesus, and put Jesus, not as the socalled "third quest of the historical Jesus" (the contemporary one) does when it puts Jesus in his Jewish context, but with the goal of putting Jesus in his hellenistic context. At the time of Jesus Israel was a part of the Hellenistic world, although under Roman governance, and so I think I am justified in trying to put Jesus in his Hellenistic context.

When we study the Hellenistic world at the time of Jesus, no Hellenistic movement reminds so much of the Jesus-movement as the Cynic movement in Greece, with Diogenes of Sinope and Antisthenes as the most wellknown representants. There were seven wellknown Hellenistic philosophical movements at that time, the Socrateans, the Platonists, the Aristotelians, the Pythagoreans, the Epicureans, the Stoics and the Cynics. Try to study them, and you will find that the Cynics had most parallels to the Jesus-movement. The Cynics were Greek holy fools and could be called "Anarchists", they were people who lived as simply as it is possible on this earth, with Diogenes living in a tub in Athens, and spending the days doing strange things, with deep spiritual symbolism, as the holy fools used to do. The Cynics were not cynical in our modern sense of the word, but in the ancient

sense, which meant "dog-like", shameless, living like animals, one with nature.

The famous liberal New Testament scholar John Dominic Crossan has suggested that the historical Jesus was a Jewish form of a Cynic, a Cynic-like Jew, an opinion that raised much controversy in the academic world in the nineties. With this book I'm trying to defend him, and I try to penetrate the relevant historical and biblical material that shows Jesus being a holy fool. Since I believe that one of Jesus's most dedicated disciples throughout church history, Saint Franciscus of Assisi, was a holy fool and a Cynic-like Roman Catholic, his interpretation of Jesus as the barefoot prophet who wandered around and said strange things, is also very interesting. I try also to compare Jesus with the holy fools of church history, people like the Greek-orthodox Russian holy fools, to get a clearer picture of what a holy fool is in the Jewish-Christian context. The holy fools of church history wanted to follow Jesus literally, as far as it was possible, and this give us a hint that Jesus himself might have been a holy fool. Saint Paul said himself that what is wisdom for God is foolishness for the world, and that he had become a fool for Christ's sake, a fool for the world.

Basically, the liberal Jesus scholars have defended the "Jesus the Jewish Cynic"-position. I want with this book show that the notion of "Jesus the Jewish Cynic" also fits with a conservative approach to the New Testament, one that believes in the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus, for example, like I do. One can without problems believe in Jesus as Messiah,

Lord and God, and at the same time believe that he was a Jewish Cynic. I see no problems with this, and the Russian Orthodox holy fools would surely have agreed.

This book is academically inspired, but I am not an academic, though a somewhat amateurish theologian, and it is not written primarily for an academic audience. I try to be simple and direct, as I hope I usually am in my writings, without complicated academic discussions and postmodernistic philosophical discourses. For I hope for my own part to become a true Cynic and a holy fool, not only a fool.

Lars Larsen, Danderyd 6.3.2022

Chapter 2: Background

The notion of Jesus as a holy fool or a Jewish Cynic is quite embarrassing for Christians who have an idealized picture of the historical Jesus in their heads, especially for conservative Christians. Their image of Jesus has namely more in common with American healing preachers like Benny Hinn (1952) than with Cynics and holy fools like Saint Franciskus of Assisi. Also for the four evangelists in the New Testament, the Cynic-like things in Jesus were embarrassing, therefore they have tried to avoid this element in their presentation of Jesus as far as possible. Their presentation of Jesus in fact encourages an idealized image of him, encourages picturing him as a Jewish Benny Hinn in Antiquity, and therefore we have to read them carefully, with uttermost scrutiny. We have to deconstruct Jesus and find what lies behind their idealized picture. To do this, we have to find certain literary clues, which open the access to "Jesus the Jewish Cynic", and we find them, yes we find them. For example in the fact that Jesus' family regarded him as insane (see [Mark 3:21](#)), or in the strange story of the temple cleansing, when Jesus acted like a real fool in the Jerusalem temple, creating chaos there, for example overturning the tables of the moneychangers, as many of you know.

* * *

The destituteness of Jesus is remarkable. The Jesus scholar and anarchist Andrew Lloyd, also known by the name Dionysia Anarxista, wrote in his book "Jesus and the Community Gospel" from 2019, "Jesus was almost certainly illiterate". It means that Jesus could not read or write. Probably he could not write. Could he read? There is some faint evidence in the gospels that he read from the Tanach, The Old Testament, in the synagogues. But I do not trust the text. I will handle this question later.

* * *

What kind of people were the Cynics? The English priest and Jesus scholar F. Gerald Downing wrote 1992 in "Cynics and Christian Origins":

"Cynic and 'Cynicism' designate the ideas and attitudes and way of life of a radical movement originating around four centuries before Christ among Greek speakers strongly influenced by Socrates...You could find Cynics in most if not all the cities of the eastern Mediterranean."

Were the Christians associated with Cynicism by their contemporaries? F. Gerald Downing wrote 1992: "An early Christian in that part of the Greco-Roman world who dressed as simply as Jesus was said to have directed, living off what others provided, inveighing against wealth, telling lively stories, following the carefree example of the birds,

reprimanding hypocrisy -and expecting trouble for his (or her) pains- would most likely have and at least initially have been classed as some sort of Cynic, it would have been the obvious category."

What would be the parallel to the ancient Cynic movement in our days? Probably the primitivist phalange of both the Anarchist movement and the Hippie movement, full of vagabonds and holy fools. All know today about the Anarchists and the Hippies, and likewise, all knew about the Cynics in the hellenistic world in the time of Jesus.

* * *

"This historical Jesus (man or myth is not the issue here) represents everything that modern Christianity does not— images of fat bishops in their cathedral palaces clad in purple robes and gold chains, just does not sit comfortably with Jesus the ascetic sage entreating his followers to abandon money, possessions and a roof over their head for a life of hardship and prayer. In some respects the asceticism of Jesus went even further than that of the ancient Cynics, who at least were permitted to beg for food, wear sandals and enjoy the comfort and security of a street corner or tub." (Ian Cutler, in the blogpost "Was Jesus a Cynic Philosopher (and a feminist)?" on the blog "Cynical reflections. Thoughts from a tub" 11.12.2011)

* * *

Historical Jesus research today, among the liberal Jesus scholars, has had a tendency of becoming hypercritical, doubting their biblical sources much more than they doubt other documents from the antiquity. Therefore it is quite outstanding that the notion of Jesus being a Jewish Cynic or holy fool come from liberal scholars, those who doubt the documents most of all. The documents have undergone a form of catharsis, and the result is beautiful, because holy foolishness is beautiful in its inner beauty. Jesus as holy fool - we find this also in Sweden in the book by the famous author Jonas Gardell, "Om Jesus" (on Jesus) from 2009 - becomes a minimal fact somehow, a fact for the theological minimalist, through this process of systematical doubt from the liberal scholars.

* * *

Jesus was no Cynic (has anyone ever proposed that?), he was only Cynic-like, as Cynic-like as a Jewish prophet in old Palestina could be. He did not feign madness like the Russian holy fools, he did not masturbate in the market place like Diogenes of Sinope, but he did other strange things that place him in the tradition of the Cynic-like Jews, where we also definitely find John the Baptist, Hosea and Jesaja. Those who dislike the "Jesus as Jewish Cynic" thesis always want to put him in the Jewish context, the context of the Jewish prophets,

as if there was no likeness to the Cynics to discover, but Jesus is both Jewish and Cynic-like, and no one with a clear, unbiased sight, can avoid seeing the parallels between Jesus and the Cynics, only those who are ashamed of Jesus' earthiness and holy foolishness, wanting to preserve the Benny Hinn-Jesus. Of course there are deep dissimilarities between Jesus and the Greek Cynics, because Jesus was Jewish, but that does not take away the similarities. Conservative scholars have a problem denying these. It is like denying that the Jesus movement among the Hippies in the sixties and seventies bore no similarities to the secular Hippies, those who were influenced by eastern religions or were atheists. The differences are enormous, but the similarities are there, so much that it is not incorrect to call the Jesus people Christian hippies.

* * *

When we say that Jesus was Cynic-like and a holy fool, we should be very careful when we listen to and read conservative Christian scholars who want to defend their Benny Hinn-like image of Jesus, because in their ears our claim is blasphemy. So far they have wandered from the real Jesus.

* * *

"Finally, first-century Lower Galilee - including the city of Sepphoris, located just five kilometers northwest of Nazareth -

represented "an epitome of Hellenistic culture," and thus provided the very setting necessary for Jesus to have come into favorable contact with itinerant Cynic philosophers."

(From "Jesus as Diogenes? Reflections on the cynic Jesus thesis", by Paul Rhodes Eddy, in JBL 115/3 (1996) 449-469, on page 457)

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The Benny Hinn-Jesus-image of conservative Jesus scholars must put the holy foolish acts of Jesus, the acts which put Jesus on like footing with the Cynics and the Russian holy fools, acts like the cleansing of the Jerusalem temple and the cursing of the fig tree, as some bizarre anomalies in Jesus life, as some sudden, unique outbursts of holy wrath, not as a scriptural revelation of who Jesus actually was behind the layer of idealization and myth and legend. I propose another agenda, where for example the cleansing of the temple was just a single example of how Jesus acted among men. An example of the fact that Jesus did many strange things, acts which were like riddles, like the Cynics did.

* * *

I believe in a dirty Jesus with soil under his nails. For example, how often did he wash his clothes under his long wanderings with his disciples? Not very often, I think. I think he smelled sweat, and I think his clothes were not pure, shining white like those famous white costumes of Benny Hinn. I think his white clothes became somewhat grey during all his wanderings. Grey and smelly. And I think he sometimes got sores on his bare feet. I will in another chapter discuss the question if he walked barefoot, as Saint Franciskus of Assis believed he did.

* * *

According to Christian historian John C. Hamer Jesus and his disciples were mendicants, beggars. They didn't work, so they lived on gifts people gave them. I think this is probable. This links them also to the Cynics, which also were mendicants.

Chapter 3: Who were the Cynics?

Jesus is so wellknown to us, that I do not introduce him. But I will introduce the Greek Cynics, unknown to most of us as they are, and a little of their history. This will give you a taste of the connections between Jesus and the Cynics, for you to understand why I connect these two phenomena.

The first Cynic mentioned by history, yes the very founder of Cynicism, is the somewhat unknown Greek philosopher Antisthenes, who lived in Athens 446 – c. 366 BC. He was a disciple of the famous Greek philosopher Socrates, and learned from him the fundamental ethical precept that virtue, not pleasure, is the goal of existence. "He held virtue to be sufficient in itself to ensure happiness, since it needed nothing else except the strength of spirit", Wikipedia says. Antisthenes lived an ascetic life because of this philosophy, and held firmly that infame is a positive thing, as also pain is. We should only obey virtue, not government laws. None of his many writings, mostly in the form of dialogues, has survived into our time. This is a great tragedy.

Antisthenes would perhaps not have agreed in being named a Cynic by later historians, it was his disciple Diogenes of Sinope (b. 412 or 404 BC, d. in Corinth in 323 BC) who really earned this name and would have agreed to it. As I have hinted at, the word Cynic comes from the Greek word kynikos, and

means "dog-like". Diogenes was dog-like, and this fact made people call him a Cynic.

For Diogenes, the dogs were his masters, nature was everything, and the government and social codes nothing. As was common in antique Greek philosophy, nature was the measuring rod by which everything was to be measured. Not government law, not the wisdom of the philosophers, not man as in modern humanism, but nature. Diogenes taught that man should follow nature, become one with nature, obey nature instead of the artificial rules of society. What was natural, was good. That's why he followed the lifestyle of the dogs, and was called dog-like, a Cynic. He was shameless in his behaviour, just as the dogs are, and lived in Athens as a homeless, sleeping in a tub, he masturbated and ate publicly in the market place (the old Greeks thought it improper to eat there), and everywhere he went, people were disturbed, because he did strange things all the time, strange things which had deep spiritual symbolism, like carrying a lighted lantern through the market place in full daylight, and answering, when he was asked why he did that, "I seek for a man". He was never imprisoned, because in the antique Greek society holy fools were revered as holy men, or, as they liked to say, philosophers. Though, Diogenes ended his life as a slave, captured by pirates, dying in Corinth. According to Wikipedia, it was also in Corinth where he taught his disciple Crates of Thebe, who in his turn taught Zeno of Citium, who transformed Cynicism into Stoicism, one of the most popular philosophies of late Hellenism.

Although Diogenes of Sinope despised bookly learning (for him philosophy was to live a virtuous life, not to have much learning), he was revered by people as a philosopher, and was treated as such by later historians, both in the Greek antiquity and later in our time. But he mocked the famous learned philosophers in Athens, and disturbed them with his shamelessness. Diogenes is known for sabotaging Platon's lectures, sometimes distracting listeners by bringing food and eating during the discussions.

But people loved him, and when his tub once went broke, people collected money and bought him a new one. As I said, he was never imprisoned, as far as we know, despite all his insanity and opposition to the government, and herein he reminds of the Russian holy fools in the Orthodox Church, which were regarded as being above the law, immune to and above all moral judgment, beyond good and evil, like the animals in the forest. In our society Diogenes would have ended up in mental hospital, for sure, and would have been silenced and passivated and broken by antipsychotic medications, but Greek antiquity had no mental hospitals and no such medications.

Diogenes lived by begging in the streets, and thus became one of the earliest inspiration sources for all later mendicant monks in the Christian era, people like the Franciskans.

Diogenes probably wrote texts, but none of his writings has survived, which also is a tragedy, the medieval monks did not

find him interesting to copy and preserve. His teaching survived through his disciples, of which Crates of Thebe (c. 365 – c. 285 BC) is the most wellknown, who in his turn was the teacher of Zeno, founder of Stoicism. Crates was not as extreme as his teacher Diogenes, but did very strange things, like renouncing a life as a wealthy man, heir to a big fortune, which he gave away to the poor, living after that in the streets in Athens like another Diogenes. A woman was in the end attracted to him, fell in love with him, and they married, and had at least two children in their homelessness. Crates and his wife lived as equals in the streets, both beggars, and had sexual intercourse in public.

Many funny and deeply spiritual stories could be told about the Cynics in this space, but let me only at last mention Demetrius the Cynic, who lived in Rome during the reigns of Caligula, Nero and Vespasian (37–71 AD), a contemporary with the apostles of Jesus, a man who maybe met and talked with Saint Peter in the market place in Rome. The contempt of Demetrius for riches is legendary, which is shown by his reply to Caligula who, wishing to corrupt him, offered him two hundred thousand sesterces (a currency at that time, very much money). Demetrius replied, "If he meant to tempt me, he ought to have tried to do so by offering his entire kingdom."

Greek antiquity had no tradition of prophets, like the Jews had, their prophets were the philosophers. Had Diogenes lived in Israel, he certainly would have been revered as one of the prophets, in some strange pseudepigraph, because there was a lot of holy foolishness in the old prophets of Israel, prophets

like Elijah, Hosea and Jesaja. None was called a philosopher in Israel.

Little was heard of the Cynics in second and first century BC, but in the first century AD Cynicism experienced a revival, and Cynics appeared up until the 5th century, after which the movement declined and died out.

It reappeared in the holy foolishness of the monasticism of the Christian religion, in strange holy men like the desert fathers and Simeon the Stylite, who lived 37 years on a small platform on top of a pillar near Aleppo (in modern Syria). Simeon and the first desert fathers were contemporary with the Cynics, but similar strange things appeared in their footsteps during all of church history after the Cynics were gone. Franciskus of Assisi in the thirteenth century AD was a Cynic-like saint, in him we find the special, deep reverence for nature which was typical for the Cynics. And the holy fools of the Eastern Orthodox Church throughout history were Cynic-like, pretending to be insane wherever they went. We have Cynic-like people even today, but they are mostly mental patients, overlooked by media and society. They are not allowed to live out their modern Cynicism, because our modern society is not so tolerant any more as it once was. The myth of progress don't work here. The existence of real Cynics or holy fools in the market place who dare to do strange things can be a test upon the tolerance of a society.

Let me say one last thing about modernism in literature. It has a Cynic element in it, in the will to break rules and shock and provoke. But when the rulebreaking has become the very Parnassus itself, when we break rules for its own sake, as a religion, it loses its power and just serves capitalism, consumerism and the destruction of nature. That has happened in our time. The artists are no longer true Cynics, as the first Modernists, like some of the Finno-Swedish Dadaists, were. Postmodernism is just late modernism, and has never overcome modernism. There scarcely exists any real postmodernism. True art and literature only lives in the poverty and suffering that was characterizing for the first Cynics and all holy fools. In suffering our hearts are made to sing their most beautiful songs. This is very strange. It is, in fact, a paradox. A Cynic paradox.

I think our best songs will be sang in the collapse of the industrial civilization, which awaits us.

Chapter 4: Defending the illiteracy of Jesus

Between 85 percent and 95 percent of the people at Jesus' time could not read or write. Therefore, the culture was mainly an oral culture, not a textual culture. New Testament professor Bart Ehrman says: "the vast majority of Palestinian Jews in this period were illiterate – probably around 97%. The exceptions were urban elites".

When Candida Moss discusses New Testament professor Chris Keith's* opinions on the matter, she writes: "Those who could read were from wealthy, elite, upper class families. And every piece of the biblical evidence we have about his social status suggests that Jesus was a craftsman. Jewish literature that was composed around the same time explicitly mentions that carpenters were not part of the scribal elite and thus would not have been able to read in great detail (Sir. 38:27). Of course there was a scale of literacy. Some of these people might have been able to sign their name, for example, but this didn't mean that they could write or read long textually difficult documents like the Bible." (read the whole article from 2019 [here](#))

It is completely unintelligible that the Saviour of the world had not written any texts if he could do it. I mean, if you really believe your message is important, you at least write it down,

if you can. At least the core of it. It is the least you can do. Jesus really was a itinerant preacher and missionary, so if he could write and was smart, he would have written down his teaching to his disciples, knowing that he soon would die, so they could remember it better, and thus he would provide a bedrock basis for any gospel writings after his death. Why didn't he do that? Didn't he have time? I think the only answer is that he couldn't. This is really a question of kenosis, the utter self-emptying of God in the incarnation. If God could become a little child which could not speak, he certainly could become a mendicant preacher who could not write.

The disciples of Jesus were probably mostly illiterate, too. In Acts 4:13 we read: "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."

If they were illiterate, Jesus cannot have been a ordinary Rabbi who taught his disciples to read. He must have been an unordinary one, one who could not read and write, because he came from the same social layer as his disciples.

* * *

The theological blogger John Anngmeister on the blog Next Theology gives two reasons why Jesus was literate, although he didn't write anything, in this blogpost:

1. Jesus was reluctant to quench the Spirit

2. Jesus was unwilling to risk corruption of the text

To the first point, let me ask the following question: Let us assume that Jesus wanted his disciples to memorize his teaching, so it could be written down at some point in time. Is this true, or, did he to the contrary never wish his disciples to ever write it down in gospels, just so the Spirit would not be quenched? Was the gospel of John against his will? If it was against it, wouldn't The Beloved Disciple, who wrote the Gospel of John, have obeyed his Masters will? Do texts really quench the Spirit? Do they do that throughout church history? Why did the missionaries in church history then work so much with Bible translation, if texts quench the Spirit?

To the second point, let me ask this: If Jesus wanted his disciples to memorize his teaching correctly in order to act like a help in the missionary work, and lay a foundation for their writings, why could he not help their memory with some texts he wrote himself? Either way, texts or oral tradition, both could be corrupted. The risk of corruption was on the other hand smaller if Jesus had helped his disciples and the world with some own texts.

* * *

One can feel it almost like a blasphemy to say that Jesus was illiterate. For conservative theologians it is disgusting, for all who have the Benny Hinn-image of Jesus that I talked of before in this article series. But why is it so? Didn't Paul say that God chooses what is weak and despised in this world? Are the conservatives ashamed of the kenosis of God? Of God's humanity? Of God's humility? I think so. They want the gospel to be something great in the eyes of this world. Therefore they reinterpret Jesus according to the spirit of the time. Thus they can defend their own worldliness, their own compromises with civilization.

I believe that one of Jesus' disciples, Matthew the publican, a close eyewitness, wrote the Gospel according to Matthew, in Aramaic (a semitic language close to Hebrew). It's a conservative opinion, but I stick to it. Sometimes I'm conservative, like a fundamentalist. I think Matthew, as a tax-collector, could read and write, as also his gospel confirms. And I think he must have taken some notes on his Master's teachings and acts, to be used in his Gospel later. Why did Matthew write down some of the things Jesus said and did, but not Jesus himself? Was Jesus too spoiled (bortskämd?) Like a diva, or what? So that Matthew and The Beloved Disciple (I think this disciple of Jesus wrote the Gospel of John, whoever he was), who also could write, got to do all the writing? Why didn't Jesus write anything? Probably because he couldn't. We haven't even a letter from Jesus, no quotations from a letter from Jesus. If Matthew and The Beloved Disciple wrote, then

Jesus could not have been of the opinion that texts would quench the Spirit.

Raphael Lataster (b.1984), a secular scholar of religion from the University of Sydney, who have defended the Aramaic Primacy Theory (that the whole New Testament was originally written in Aramaic), has also defended the theory that Jesus never existed, that he is purely mythical. There is a link between these two theories. The original Jesus, who spoke Galilean Aramaic, was so different from the later Hellenistic Jesus of the Roman Church, about as different as Diogenes of Sinope is from Benny Hinn, that Lataster could not find a real Jesus in the Bible. That the real Jesus really was illiterate, is a big portion of this difference. Probably most disciples of Jesus were illiterate as well. Was this one of the secrets behind their folkly charisma on the Day of Pentecost? It makes me think of Evan Roberts, who started the Welsh revival 1904-1905, one of the greatest and most powerful spiritual revivals of history. Roberts, who was a poor coal worker. The Bible confirms this pattern. "God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast in His presence." (1 Cor. 1, 28-29)

* * *

The Greek Cynic philosophers were probably mostly literate. That Jesus was illiterate makes him even more destitute than

they were, and this probably contributed to his shameful death on the cross.

* he is research professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St. Mary's University, London and author of several books on the subject including "Jesus' Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee"

Chapter 5: Was Jesus a mamzer, a "bastard" ?

New Testament professor Bruce Chilton argues in his book "Rabbi Jesus. An intimate biography" (2002) that Jesus was a mamzer, hebrew for "bastard" (oäkting), a result of forbidden relationships or incest, based on Matthew 1:18-25: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

Now, Chilton writes that mamzers at the time of Jesus were ostracized from the community, excluded from the synagogue, and ridiculed by other children.

Could this be the start of the outsider life of Jesus the Nazarene? I think so. It's very probable. Is this the reason why Jesus in his later life cared so for the outcasts of society? I think so.

But I do not believe in the virgin birth. Jesus was a ordinary man, who was chosen by God to become Messiah, and became it in his resurrection. Before that, he walked a long path to perfection. That do not exclude him from being God incarnate, if you have a kenotic view of God, as I explain more in detail in my novel "Naturväsändenas återkomst".

Chapter 6: Did Jesus talk like a hillbilly (lantis)?

In this article, "Jesus and Aramaic" by K. B. Napier, I find what follows: "Jesus would have spoken the 'general' Aramaic known to most people. We know this because of the way different regions accepted His presence and flocked to hear Him. But, He also spoke the Galilean Aramaic of his immediate district. The differences were much like modern UK differences between, say, broad Newcastle or Glaswegian, and Kentish. Frankly, I cannot understand much of the northern dialects, catching only a few phrases and words! Yet, if I listen very carefully I can often deduce what is being said."

Galilee, where Nazareth lay, lay at the time of Jesus in the Palestinian countryside. Nazareth was a mountain village consisting of about a few hundred to at most 2000 inhabitants at the time of Jesus. Jesus was a "hillbilly". Hillbilly is a word they use derogatively in US for people who dwell in rural, mountainous areas in the United States, primarily in southern Appalachia and the Ozarks. Or what about a backwoodsman, or a "lantis", like they say in Sweden. "Jesus var en lantis", Jonas Gardell wrote in his famous book "Om Jesus" ("On Jesus", 2009). It's so obvious. And he talked like one. Not very impressive for the Jerusalem rabbis, who spoke another dialect, The Old Judean Aramaic, a dialect of Western Aramaic, as also Early Galilean Aramaic, the dialect of Jesus, was.

Chapter 7: Was Jesus really homeless?

When one does a search on the ecological search engine Ecosia (I recommend it) for "Jesus was homeless", most of the result pages deny that Jesus was homeless. Let me therefore delve into the subject a little deeper.

Jesus worked in his adult life as a carpenter, before he became a mendicant preacher. This was a vocation without status at that time. Carpenters belonged to the bottom of society. The salary was horrible.

In the book *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (1994), Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan writes that Artisans made up "about 5 percent of the population [of the Roman Empire], below the peasants in social class because they were usually recruited and replenished from its dispossessed members. . . .If Jesus was a carpenter, therefore, he belonged to the Artisan class."

From Mark 2:1: "A few days later Jesus went back to Capernaum. And when the people heard that He was home...", we can easily get the impression that Jesus owned a house during his ministry as a mendicant preacher.

But why do Jesus say in Luke 9:57-58; "As they were traveling on the road someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go!" Jesus told him, "Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."?"

From this verse it's pretty obvious that Jesus had no home that he could call his own. And the home mentioned in Mark 2:1, was probably the home of some friend of Jesus, who boarded him for a limited time, just what his disciples were supposed to ask for in Matthew 10:11: "Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave." Isn't it pretty probable that Jesus did what he taught his disciples to do? That is, stay in the houses of worthy friends when he entered a city? Strange that this point has bypassed the fundamentalists who think Jesus owned an own home.

Did Jesus have the money to rent a house, then, when he entered a city? Probably not. He lived from the gifts of others, he was a beggar, and he probably did not abuse the gifts to comforts like an own house.

Chapter 8: Was Jesus really barefoot?

The only verse in question, which is relevant here, is Matthew 10:9-10:

"“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts — no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.”"

Observe that Jesus says "sandals", not "extra sandals". He commanded the disciples to walk barefoot on their missionary journeys, without sandals, and Franciskus of Assisi also understood it in this way, and obeyed the commandment - and walked barefoot the rest of his life, and so did his disciples. All of them, during their master's life.

And if the Master commands someone to do something, don't you think he walks his talk? If Jesus commanded the disciples to walk barefoot, don't you think he walked barefoot himself?

Sure, The gospel of Mark says in chapter 6:10: "Wear sandals but not an extra shirt." But is Mark the first gospel, and so the more trustworthy one? No, church tradition has always put Matthew as the first gospel, and I think it was first. Usually the more radical commandments are the earlier ones, because Jesus was very radical.

If you try to explain away this, as many rich Christians do, I think it is because they want a easier way, not because they really find their comfort and luxuries in the Scriptures.

The cynics walked barefoot, and Jesus reminded of them in this area.

There is not much more to say about this.

Epilogue: The most cynic-like words of Jesus

It is found in the Sermon of the Mount, the most important sermon of Jesus, in [Matt. 6: 25-34](#):

”[25](#)Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? [26](#)Look at the birds of the air: They do not sow or reap or gather into barns—and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? [27](#)Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?*f*

[28](#)And why do you worry about clothes? Consider how the lilies of the field grow: They do not labor or spin. [29](#)Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was adorned like one of these. [30](#)If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

[31](#)Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ [32](#)For the Gentiles strive after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. [33](#)But seek first the

kingdom of God^g and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.

34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.”